

VSCFF Task Force Town Meeting  
June 17, 2020

Group 2: How can we modify or restructure the college system to insure efficiency?

Moderator: Cindy Hill

Note Taker: Helen Mango

Most of the discussion focused on how to balance specialization of courses/programs/individual campus “personality” with system-wide accessibility and efficiency.

Using distance learning to enhance accessibility and efficiency

Our current experience with system-wide distance learning may provide opportunities. Each campus could be a portal to every other campus. Anyone at one location should be able to access resources at any other location by taking advantage of distance-learning technology.

- Electives are limited on each individual campus; broadening access to specific courses across the system would benefit all students.
- Students from outside the system or out of state could be drawn in to take a specific course
- Downside: Some courses can only be done in-person (e.g. fine arts performance)
- Statewide broadband needs to be enhanced so that all students have access (although having groups within a general region meet in specific places that have good internet access could help)

Specialization at individual campuses

This is a sort of “magnet school” concept – Decide which programs should only be at one campus, and invest resources there.

- This would mean those programs would be better resourced and viable (more students, no competition within the system).
- Downside: Students who must attend other campuses (e.g. for financial reasons) would not have access to those majors or courses within the major. How would this affect the VSCS mission?
- Concern that this would be an excuse to lay off faculty
- Structural change will create winners and losers

Create a “Vermont State University” system

What if the system was a true “Vermont State University” system (or some equivalent), with different campuses, as opposed to the more disjointed five-college system we currently have?

- Can this be leveraged to position the system to attract more students from outside Vermont/Northeast? Vermont already has a valuable “brand” that is known nationally and internationally.
- We need to reduce our internal competition for the same potential students.

- Can we do better by using system-wide marketing and outreach? More \$\$ is needed to enhance recruitment outside Vermont/Northeast.
- Would this destroy the individuality of each campus?
- Athletics are very important to students. This is a big part of how students identify with a particular college.

Other points raised:

- We need to align our teacher education system better with the K-12 system. For example, education programs are still using exams to assess students, while the K-12 system is going to proficiency-based assessment.
- The SUNY system might provide guidance – they have some centralized administrative functions, and others that are done by specific campuses. Individual campuses have specific programs that they are known for.

3. How can we work together as unions and campuses without being in competition?

- A lot of the talk about no duplication of programs
  - Students need regional access; we have to consider geography
  - Shouldn't we have science programs in northern Vermont and southern Vermont.
  - We need to think of ourselves as a system.
  - An NVU student should be able to take a course or even minor in something at Castleton, for example.
- It is hard when students take a course at another college in the system, but there is no "equate" set up. What about a single general education across the system?
  - What are the barriers?
    - Faculty passionate about our own gen eds; different goals and outcomes
    - We have never been a system, so we are very different.
- Have they looked at low-enrolled programs?
- Administrative side (marketing; admissions; security)
  - We are competing against each other, this is extra cost.
  - For students it could be confusing to apply to one university, but then be told that they have to go to campus A to do thing B.
  - When NVU unified, Lyndon got lost in the process!! They ceased to exist. For example, students got sent to broken link when they searched for Atmospheric Science.
    - If we are going to be one institution, we need to be very careful.
- Psychology on each NVU campus is very different; students are confused that they can't get either degree at either place; they are not duplicate program
- What about this model?
  - First two years are gen ed only = online
  - Last two years = upper level major courses
    - Problem: first-year students are more vulnerable so they might not want online options
    - Gen eds are usually very full.

Labor Task Force Town Hall Kick-off, June 17, 2020

How can we best achieve our mission of serving a public good for our students and the state of Vermont?

Moderator: Alison Lathrop

Note taker: Beth Walsh

Philip Parisi, Patricia Shine, Alison Lathrop, Jenny Harris, Jenny Bryan, Joan Richard-Hall, Karen Madden, Jal (VTC control systems), Jason Pelletier, Heather Blair, Hilary Linehan, Jason Kaiser, John Rhodes, Jason Eter, Kim Hannon-Brobst, nxh04280 (left) Bonnie Hanley, Sally Caldwell

### Define public good

- State thinks we should be producing a tangible product, which we don't actually do
- Founded in service to all Vermonters, something to do with us providing higher education for those in our region and beyond (bandwidth)
- Now more than ever affordable, accessible education around the state
- Not state supported enough to be affordable
- "Product that an individual can consume while not depriving it to others" google result
- Esoteric thing, not economic. Living productive, economic lives, good family life.
- If we are funded by the taxpayers of Vermont, we need to explain it to them and prove that we are providing it. Every Vermonter provides the taxes that goes toward state funding.
- Educating people. Community members didn't understand the public good other than getting a job. Voting, community involvement, good parent, good neighbor
- People want education to be affordable, important, want it for their kids and grandkids. Everyone struggles to pay their taxes. Want it affordable, but don't want their taxes to go up.
- Nursing and teachers, come from us. We need educators and nurses to bolster our society. Have to have replacements. And nursing faculty.
- Psychology and human services. In NEK, staffed by graduates from our department. Staying here, buying houses, paying taxes, and working for the public good. People won't relocate to the NEK.
- Students that graduate from VTC Randolph, get jobs and they are wanted. Local businesses have a hard time finding educated people. Contributing to the state, as a whole. To build the state is public good.
- Go out and get a job. How about go out and make a job? How do we equip people with a boost to their creativity, and not be saddled with the debt, very fancy car or small house, will not be in a position to start a business. We need to be conscious of what they will do when they leave us. HE is not a personal good, it is a community good, when students are free to let their imaginations go
- Support more loan forgiveness programs, stay in Vermont for 5 years, clear benefit to a state
- VSAC portability, advocate for VSAC money to be used for VSC schools

- NVU Strong, bridge the education with local businesses, don't go at loggerheads with NVU Strong, making their way to become employers, and not only employees.
- 2003 article in Seven Days. Vermont Model tries to tag students with funding, not institutions with funding. If we had numbers with VSCS stay in Vermont, vs how many who take VSAC funds out of state are in Vermont. It might be time for an op ed.
- Plan to benefit Vermont in general, improve the economy in Vermont. We offer a public good and that comes with a cost. State hasn't really participated in this enough. College and HE, improves the economy of the state. We are committed, willing to work harder, we need this to move the colleges from this level to this level. If they don't come up we don't have a chance to do the common good. We are working harder, getting courses online, but they need to come up with the funding.
- There is often times that we need to educate ourselves of the value of our own system. Dental hygiene, offering good to the public, but we are sometimes educating our students to go into one direction, there are so many ways that we could be collaborating with. If we are cut back to a 2 year program, the collaboration will go away, and we will only be providing one direction.
- Every kid grows up in a bubble, kids have ideas on what they want to do, but college exposes us to so much more. Expands peoples vision.